

## WRITING ARTIST STATEMENTS

The artist's statement is an important marketing tool used by professional artists and craftspeople that is very helpful in giving the viewer/potential buyer important information about the artist and the artwork they produce. The purpose is to give the viewer or potential buyer information about the artist, a specific artwork or body of works. Most industry professionals agree that as much as 30% of a consumer's decision making about purchasing art is affected by the artist statement. An artist's statement is a key part of any artist's portfolio.

*"As any craftsperson or avid collector will attest, there is something truly special about buying a piece of art that was carefully crafted by human hands. But being invited into the artist's psyche, learning more about the work and its creator can make the experience even more remarkable."* –Judith Jacobs, Artist

Your artist statement should describe who you are as an artist and what your art is about. It should both discuss the process you take to create your art and inform viewers of your intentions of the finished product. A good artist's statement makes direct reference to either the specific art piece or the body of work that it is intended to accompany.

### 1. **To Get your Brain Going**

List individual words or short phrases that come to mind when asked these questions:

- What is your favorite art material? Why?
- How would you describe your artwork in an e-mail?
- Besides the work of other artists, what influences your artwork?
- What do you like best about being an artist?
- Why do you make art?
- What is most challenging about being an artist?
- How do you begin a piece of artwork?
- What does it mean when you say a piece of artwork "turned out really well"?
- What do you want others to feel or think when they see your artwork?
- What influences your art when you are creating it?
- How do you come up with ideas for your artwork?
- What events or experiences have contributed to your development as an artist?



## 2. Artist's Statement Framework:

These frameworks will help you mold the words and thoughts from above into document form. Each paragraph should have 3 to 5 sentences. Most artists' statements are one page. Write in first person present tense - "I am" NOT "I was", "I do" NOT "I did".

### **Paragraph 1-** Introduce yourself. Why do you do the work you do?

Support your statement telling the reader more about your goals and aspirations. Relate your goals to your art. Discuss your artistic beliefs or philosophy of art making. Make a clear and concise statement about your artistic values or aesthetic or why you create. Support that statement with at least two reasons. You can also support your statements with reference to artistic influences from other well-known artists or from your education.

**Paragraph 2-** Tell the reader how you make decisions before, during, and after an artwork is created. How and why do you select materials, techniques and themes? Keep it simple and BE SPECIFIC. Describe one of your works or a body of your work in such a way as to guide a viewer to understanding. This could include your use of the elements of art and principles of design, your unique use of tools and materials, or your style.

**Paragraph 3-** Tell the reader a little more about your current work. How did this work grow out of prior artwork or life experiences? What are you exploring, attempting or challenging by doing this work? Give the reader/viewer closure. Give a few more hints about your work. This is where you can point out a theme or discuss those experiences that influence your work.

## 3. Helpful Hints:

- If you have trouble writing about yourself, write about an artist you admire. Then write about yourself from that point of view.
- Begin writing as if you were talking to someone about your art
- Have a friend ask you questions about your artwork. Take notes as you answer the questions
- Have someone who is not familiar with your artwork read your statement and ask you questions
- Create a statement that makes the reader want to look at and know more about your artwork
- Your statement should be more than just a description of your art and/or art process
- Read other practicing artist's statements on their website to help you to understand how to use artistic jargon and language in your statement.
- Read your statement aloud as you edit
- Have a classmate, another teacher, a friend, a parent etc. read your artist's statement while looking at your artwork
- Exercise word economy. Be selective in your choices of terms and words. Be concise.
- Discuss your personal art values or aesthetic (the philosophy behind your work; the reasons you create)
- Describe your style and medium (this is a good place to point out your unique creative processes)
- Include events or experiences that have contributed to your development as an artist.
- Give a concise and authoritative close.
- Avoid pretentiousness; make it easy and interesting to read and understand
- Sound confident in your tone. This will help you to be taken seriously.

